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WELLS - NEXT - THE - SEA
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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ANNUAL REPORT
of the
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for the Year 1953
to which is appended the
REPORT OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR

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WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Local Health Office,
The Rectory,
Church Street,
WELLS,
Norfolk.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR
THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1953

INTRODUCTION

Mr Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present for your information and consideration the Annual Report for the year 1953 compiled according to the directions of the Minister of Health.

The outstanding feature of the year was the flood disaster on the night of the 31st January/1st February when the coastal fringe of North and West Norfolk was overwhelmed along with the lowlands on both sides of the North Sea, causing the loss of many lives and heavy damage to property and land.

The general health of the Town has been good. There was no epidemic of any infectious diseases. The death rate was lower than in previous years and when adjusted to compare with the rate for England and Wales was considerably lower than that for the country as a whole. The birth rate was also higher than that for the rest of the country.

I have to record that the work of the Department was done by others to whom goes the credit; my responsibility lies in compiling this report.

I thank the Chairman and Members for the courtesy and consideration shown to the Public Health Staff during the year.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

J. COUTTS MILNE.

Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman and Members of
the Wells Urban District Council.

STAFF

Medical Officer of Health.

J.C. JOHNSTON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.
(Up to July, 1953)

J.H.F. NORBURY, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.
(Acting from July to 15th December, 1953)

J. COUTTS MILNE, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., D.T.M.&H.
(From 16th December, 1953)

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor

F. RODWELL, M.R.S.I., M.S.A.I.

Clerk to Medical Officer of Health

MISS M. HEWITT.
(To 31st October, 1953)

The Committee concerned with public health is the
Public Health Committee.

PART 1.

(General Report of the Medical Officer of Health)

1. STAFF

It is with deep regret that I record the untimely death in July 1953 of Dr. J. C. Johnston, who had been Medical Officer of Health for the District since October 1947 and who during that time had faithfully carried out his chief function of safe-guarding the health of the District by all means at his disposal. His care for the people extended beyond his official duties and was shown by his ardent interest and sustained endeavor in regard to safety in the home and Red Cross work.

Dr. J. H. F. Norbury, Medical Officer of Health for Cromer and Sheringham Urban District Councils' and Erpingham Rural District Council, acted as Medical Officer of Health in addition to his own duties until Dr. J. Coutts Milne was appointed to the post. The latter took up duty on 16th December, 1953.

Miss M. Hewitt vacated the appointment of Clerk to the Medical Officer of Health on the 31st October, and this post remained vacant to the end of the year.

The population of the town as estimated by the Registrar General for mid 1953 is 2,610. This shows an increase of 33 over the figure for 1952. The natural increase of births over deaths amounted to 15. The population figure has remained fairly steady over the past 15 years.

2. BIRTH AND DEATH RATE

During the year there were 47 live births giving a birth rate of 18.0 per 1,000 of the population. The comparability factor given by the Registrar General, which when applied to the local rate gives a figure which can be compared with the rates in other areas, is 1.08 for births. Thus the adjusted birth rate is 19.4 which compares with the rate of 15.5 for England and Wales as a whole. The 32 deaths gives a crude death rate of 12.3 per 1,000 of the estimated resident population - the comparability factor is 0.71 and this gives an adjusted rate of 8.75 which compares with the rate of 11.4 for England and Wales.

3. INFANT MORTALITY RATE

There was 1 death in children under one year. The infant mortality rate is 21.27 per 1,000 related births compared with 26.8 for England and Wales as a whole. It should be noted that rates based on such a small number are apt to be misleading.

4. CANCER

8 of the deaths in the Town were recorded from Cancer including one in a woman from cancer of the lung.

5. INFECTIOUS DISEASES

(a) GENERAL

There were 24 cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the year; an increase of 8 over the previous year.

(b) MEASLES

Only 2 cases were reported during the year compared with 13 in 1952. The Town was fortunate in this compared with the experience in the rest of England and Wales where the outbreak of Measles in the first quarter of the year was very severe - in the sixth and seventh weeks of the year more cases were reported than in any week since notification began.

(c) WHOOPIING COUGH

There was an increase in the amount of Whooping Cough reported, viz. 16 cases compared with none in 1952. Most of the cases occurred during the last 3 months of the year.

(d) SCARLET FEVER AND DIPHTHERIA

No case of Scarlet Fever or Diphtheria was reported. The last case of Diphtheria was recorded in 1948 in an adult. The value of diphtheria immunisation is now fully established but the need for securing immunisation of not less than 75% of babies before their first birthday and for maintaining immunity by giving booster doses when a child enters school and again 5 years later must be continually impressed on all parents. The recent outbreak of Diphtheria in the Midlands has shown that the disease can still occur in this country.

(f) POLIOMYELITIS

One case of Poliomyelitis occurred in an adult female in September. She was immediately admitted to hospital and recovered with some residual paralysis.

In the rest of England and Wales poliomyelitis began to rise in June and reached a maximum in August and then fell steadily - for 2 weeks in August more cases were reported than in any similar period previously.

(g) INFECTIVE HEPATITIS

5 cases were notified - all in the last quarter of the year - 4 males and 1 female and all adults. Combining the figures of infective hepatitis for the three districts in Area No. 8, cases notified totalled 35 among a combined population of approximately 43,000, giving an incidence rate of 0.8 per 1,000 per annum. The disease is said to be most frequent during the autumn and winter and this was the case in Wells Urban District and Walsingham Rural District but in Docking Rural District most of the cases occurred in February and March. Children of school age are often chiefly affected but amongst the 35 cases only 15 were of school age. Spread of infection is known to be from case to case and prevention lies in improved personal and environmental hygiene in school and home.

(h) TUBERCULOSIS

Two new adult male cases were notified during the year, as compared with 3 in 1952. No death was recorded from Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

At the end of December 18 cases remained on the register, and 16 of these were of the pulmonary type. This is an increase of one over the 1952 figures.

6. FLOOD DISASTER

On the night of the 31st January/1st February a disaster of the greatest magnitude struck the Norfolk Coast. A combination of high tides and strong north easterly gales resulted in flooding all along the coast. Wells Town was flooded both in Freeman Street - Quay area and to the East End of the Town, the water having come round the back....

inundating Polka Road-Church Plain area. A Reception Centre was set up in the Wells C.P. School and the great bulk of accommodation of the evacuees was found with friends and relatives. The main Public Health problems were the inundation of the Sewage Disposal Works, removal of debris from inside and around houses and the removal of animal carcasses. The Surveyor made immediate arrangements to get buckets available to deal with the stoppage of the Sewage Works.

13. VACCINATION AND IMMUNISATION IN AREA NO. 8

Vaccination Only 230 children under the age of one year were vaccinated during 1953 in Area No. 8 comprising the Urban Districts of Wells and Hunstanton and the Rural Districts of Docking and Walsingham. There were 848 births during the year in the Area so that only the equivalent of 27% of the children born were vaccinated - not by any means a satisfactory state of affairs. 346 reports of primary vaccination and 232 of re-vaccination were received during the year. The following table gives details of the age groups:-

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Vaccinated</u>	<u>Re-vaccinated</u>
Under 1 year	230	-
Aged 1 year	7	3
2 to 4 years	21	20
5 to 14 years	32	63
15 years and over	57	146
Totals	<u>346</u>	<u>232</u>

International Vaccination Certificates Persons travelling abroad are required to produce evidence of vaccination within a period of three years on the prescribed international certificates. These certificates have to be countersigned by the Medical Officer of Health for the district in which the general practitioner resides who has carried out the vaccination.

Diphtheria Immunisation Diphtheria immunisation is best carried out during the last quarter of the child's first year of life and "booster" doses require to be given at the ages of 5 and 9 years. Immunisation is carried out at infant welfare centres and at surgeries and homes and re-immunisations at school medical inspections.

The following table shows the number of children who were immunised during the year in Area No. 8.

<u>Primary Immunisation</u>				
<u>Under 1 year.</u>	<u>1 year.</u>	<u>2 years.</u>	<u>3 years.</u>	<u>4 years.</u>
203	124	8	2	3
<u>5 to 9.</u>	<u>10 to 14.</u>			
1	4	Total	345	

<u>Booster Doses</u>		
<u>5 to 9 years.</u>	<u>10 to 14 years.</u>	<u>Total</u>
139	32	171

The number of children in Area No. 8 known to have been immunised at any time up to the end of 1953 is as follows:-

<u>Under School age</u>	<u>School age</u>	<u>Total</u>
1649	5009	6658

PART 11.

(Medical Statistics)

TABLE 1. GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (in acres )	...	...	...	...	2,670
Estimated Resident Population	...	...	...	...	2,610
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	£12,564
Sum Represented by a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	£47

TABLE 11. LIVE BIRTHS

					Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	...	...	...	...	23	23	46
Illegitimate	...	...	...	...	-	1	1
Total					23	24	47

Live Birth Rate per 1,000 of Estimated Resident Population-17.62

TABLE 111. STILL BIRTHS

					Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	...	...	...	...	1	-	1
Illegitimate	...	...	...	...	-	-	-
Total					1	-	1

Rate

Still Birth per 1,000 of Estimated Resident Population - 0.38

TABLE 1V. DEATHS (ALL AGES)

					Males	Females	Total
					13	19	32

Crude Death Rate per 1,000 of Estimated Resident Population
12.26

TABLE V. INFANT MORTALITY (DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER 1 YEAR)

					Males	Females	Total
Cause -					-	1	1
Meningococcal							
Meningitis					-	1	1
Total							

Infant Mortality per 1,000 Live Births ... 21.27

TABLE VI. CAUSE OF TOTAL DEATHS

	Males	Females	Total
3. Syphilitic disease	-	1	1
6. Meningococcal infections ...	-	1	1
10. Malignant neoplasm, stomach ...	1	-	1
11. Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	-	1	1
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms ...	2	4	6
16. Diabetes	-	1	1
17. Vascular lesions of nervous system	2	3	5
18. Coronary disease, angina ...	1	2	3
19. Hypertension with heart disease	1	-	1
20. Other heart disease	1	1	2
21. Other circulatory disease ...	-	1	1
22. Influenza	-	1	1
23. Pneumonia	1	-	1
24. Bronchitis	2	-	2
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases ...	1	3	4
34. All other accidents	1	-	1
Total	13	19	32

TABLE VII. DEATHS ACCORDING TO AGES

	Males	Females	Total
Under 1 year	-	-	-
1 and under 20 years	-	-	-
20 and under 30 years	1	1	2
30 and under 40 years	1	-	1
40 and under 50 "	-	-	-
50 and under 60 "	-	-	-
60 and under 70 "	2	2	4
70 and under 80 "	5	10	15
80 and under 90 "	3	6	9
90 and under 100 "	-	1	1
Total	12	20	32
Total Adjusted	13	19	32

TABLE VIII. CANCER

The following table shows the incidence of Cancer Deaths during the past five years:-

	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
Males	1	3	3	0	3
Females	2	9	1	5	5
Total	3	12	4	5	8

TABLE 1X. SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS

				1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
Population	...	...	...	2,512	2,600	2,577	2,577	2,610
Live Births	...	...	...	39	40	44	56	47
Still Births	...	...	...	1	1	1	2	1
Deaths	...	...	...	37	43	39	35	32
Infant Deaths	...	...	...	-	1	-	3	1

TABLE X. SUMMARY OF BIRTHS AND DEATH RATES

				1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
Live Births	...	...	...	15.32	15.39	17.00	21.72	17.62
Still Births	....	...	...	0.39	0.38	0.38	0.77	0.38
Crude Deaths	...	...	...	10.70	16.53	15.11	13.58	12.26
Infant Mortality	...	...	...	NIL	25.00	NIL	53.57	21.27

TABLE XI. TUBERCULOSIS (DETAILS OF NEW CASES DURING 1953)

Age Period	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M	F	M	F
0 - 15	-	-	-	-
15 - 25	-	-	-	-
25 and over	2	-	-	-
Total	2	-	-	-

TABLE XII. TUBERCULOSIS (NUMBER OF CASES ON REGISTER ENDED 1953)

	Males	Females	Total
Respiratory	7	8	15
Non-Respiratory	2	-	2
Total	9	8	17

TABLE XIII. TUBERCULOSIS (NEW CASES FOR LAST 5 YEARS)

		1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
Respiratory	M	1	1	2	1	2
	F	2	2	1	2	-
Non-Respiratory	M	1	1	-	-	-
	F	-	-	-	-	-
Total		4	4	3	3	2

TABLE XIV. BIRTH-RATES, DEATH-RATES, ANALYSIS OF MORTALITY, MATERNAL MORTALITY AND CASE-RATES FOR CERTAIN INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN THE YEAR 1953. PROVISIONAL FIGURES BASED ON QUARTERLY RETURNS.

England and Wales	160 County Boroughs & Great Towns (including London)	160 Smaller Towns (Resident Population 25,000 - 50,000 at 1951 Census)	Wells Urban District
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RATES PER 1,000 HOME POPULATION

BIRTHS

Live Births	15.5	17.0	15.7	17.62
Still Births	{ 0.35	{ 0.43	0.34	0.38
	(22.4 (a)	24.8 (a)	21.4 (a)	14.56 (a)

DEATHS

All Causes	11.4	12.2	11.3	12.26
Typhoid & paratyphoid	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Whooping Cough	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
Diphtheria	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tuberculosis	0.20	0.24	0.19	0.00
Influenza	0.16	0.15	0.17	0.38
Smallpox	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Acute poliomyelitis (including polioencephalitis)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
Pneumonia	0.55	0.59	0.52	0.38

NOTIFICATIONS (CORRECTED)

Typhoid Fever	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Paratyphoid fever	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
Meningococcal Infection	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.00
Scarlet Fever	1.39	1.50	1.44	0.00
Whooping Cough	3.58	3.72	3.38	6.13
Diphtheria	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
Erysipelas	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.00
Smallpox	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Measles	12.36	11.27	12.32	0.76
Pneumonia	0.84	0.92	0.76	0.38
Acute Poliomyelitis (including Polioencephalitis)				
Paralytic	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.38
Non-Paralytic	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.00
Food Poisoning	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.00
Puerperal pyrexia	18.23 (a)	24.33 (a)	12.46 (a)	0.00 (a)

RATES PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS

DEATHS

All causes under 1 year of age	26.8 (b)	30.8	24.3	0.38
Enteritis and diarrhoea under 2 years of age	1.1	1.3	0.9	0.0

- (a) Per 1,000 Total (Live and Still) Births.
(b) Per 1,000 related live births.

TABLE XV. INFECTIOUS DISEASES (ACCORDING TO AGE GROUP)

	Under One	1-2	3-4	5-9	10-14	15-24	25 and over	Total
Whooping Cough	-	-	2	14	-	-	-	16
Acute Poliomyelitis	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Measles	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2

(b)

	Under 5	5-14	15-44	45-64	65 and Over	Total
Acute Pneumonia	-	-	1	-	-	1
Jaundice	1	-	3	-	1	5

Council Offices,
Wells,
Norfolk.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Wells-next-the-Sea Urban District Council,

Mr. Chairman, Lady and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my report for the year ended 31st
December, 1953.

INSPECTIONS

The number of inspections carried out in connection with
Public Health work during the year are as follows:-

<u>Nature of Inspection</u>	<u>Number of Visits</u>
Housing Survey	200
Housing Repair, Overcrowding etc.	156
Building Byelaws, Drainage and Water Supply	258
Disinfections	1
Disinfestations	2
Slaughterhouses	261
Shops	18
Factories and Workshops	7
Drainage and Closet conversions	54
Nuisances and Miscellaneous	147
Pests Act	16
Total	<u>1,110</u>

TIDAL FLOODING

The tidal surge of the 31st January flooded the whole area of marshes north of Freeman Street and those East of the Town, also houses on both sides of Freeman Street, The Quay and East End, on the north side of the Town, and houses at Northfield Avenue, Polka Road, Church Flain and in the area between The Buttlands and Burnt Street. The total area flooded within the Urban District was approximately 620 acres, the greater part of which, owing to the breaches made in the sea bank, was flooded by each tide for a period of seven weeks, the last breach not being closed to exclude the tide until the 23rd March.

The following are details of damage to properties by the surge, in addition to the Beach premises which were swept away:-

129 houses flooded to varying depths.
24 " with light structural damage.
11 " with major damage.
1 " damaged beyond repair.
8 shops flooded.
4 bakehouses flooded.

Owing to the flooding of the sewage outfall works, it was necessary to cut the new sewer at East End and divert the flow from the Zone B pumping station and the Northfield Estate into a disused sewer discharging into the Harbour, and in response to a request, I received on the 2nd February 400 closet pails from the War Department stores which were distributed to all houses with water closets drained direct to the main outfall works, and the full nightsoil collection was recommenced during the emergency.

The breaches in the Beach Road bank swept away about 300 yards of the water main to the Beach and the heavy traffic to repair the breaches damaged a further $\frac{1}{2}$ mile making it necessary to renew or relay practically a mile of water main.

A further difficulty was created by the large number of drowned cattle and sheep, most of which were swept by the tide on to the marshes to the north of Freeman Street, and numbers of dead sheep were discovered inside houses covered with debris when the water subsided several days after the flooding. All dead animals which were accessible were removed to knackers yards and the others found on the marshes were buried where found.

I must place on record the prompt assistance received from the War Department, Air Ministry, Norfolk County Council and others in helping to put in hand measures to keep the Public Health Services in operation.

STATUTARY NOTICES

No statutory notices were served on owners of properties requiring repairs during the year.

WATER SUPPLY

The water consumption during the year was 23,403,000 gallons, an increase of 2,935,000 gallons on the previous year's consumption, which is mainly due to the drainage works carried out by the Council and closet conversions during the year.

SEWERAGE

The contract for reconnections of properties to the new sewers was completed during the year, and steady progress was made by property owners in closet conversions.

During the floods the Zone B pumping station was flooded to a depth of 2 feet and was out of action for two days, pumping being resumed on the 2nd February. The whole of the outfall works was completely covered with sea water and was out of action 16 days, pumping being resumed on the 17th February within 4 hours of the water clearing the site of the works.

The settlement of the sedimentation tanks still continued during the year and is creating difficulty in the drawing off of the sludge.

PESTS ACT

During the year poisoning was carried out in various parts of the Town and on the Refuse Dump. No serious infestation was noted during the year.

SCAVENGING

Collection of Refuse is carried out by means of a Karrier Bantam lorry, the refuse being dumped at Warham Road on the site of former lime workings.

FOOD INSPECTION

Slaughtering was carried out at the Ministry of Food slaughterhouse, Newgate Lane, throughout the year. The premises were well managed and I had every assistance from the staff. During the year 2 cases of Swine Fever were discovered at the slaughterhouse and it was necessary to close part of the premises pending confirmation of the outbreaks.

The following are details of the number of carcasses inspected during the year:-

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Total
Number inspected	638	131	51	1,803	928	3,551
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	242		10	46	66	364
% of number affected with diseases other than Tuberculosis	24.5		17.6	2.55	6.03	8.47

The following are details of the carcasses and parts condemned:-

	Cattle	Total
<u>TUBERCULOSIS</u>		
10 Carcasses	6,636 lbs.	
28 Sets Lungs	270 lbs.	
8 Livers	113 lbs.	
17 Heads and Tongues	523 lbs.	
Part Carcasses	<u>101</u> lbs.	7,643 lbs.

<u>OTHER DISEASES</u>		
20 Carcasses	11,649 lbs.	
9 Heads and Tongues	301 lbs.	
122 Whole or part Livers	1,352 lbs.	
Part Carcasses	<u>1,364</u> lbs.	<u>14,666</u> lbs.
		22,309 lbs.

	Calves	
<u>TUBERCULOSIS</u>		
1 Carcase	<u>177</u> lbs.	177 lbs.
<u>OTHER DISEASES</u>		
3 Carcasses	265 lbs.	
Part Carcasses	<u>29</u> lbs.	<u>294</u> lbs.
		471 lbs.

	Sheep	
<u>OTHER DISEASES</u>		
30 Carcasses	1,621 lbs.	
Part Carcasses	<u>99</u> lbs.	1,720 lbs.

	Pigs	
<u>TUBERCULOSIS</u>		
6 Carcasses	1,317 lbs.	
Part Carcasses	<u>79</u> lbs.	1,396 lbs.
<u>OTHER DISEASES</u>		
19 Carcasses	3,086 lbs.	
Part Carcasses	<u>491</u> lbs.	<u>3,577</u> lbs.
		<u>4,973</u> lbs.

Total Weight of Fresh Meat Condemned 29,473 lbs.

The following foodstuffs were condemned after damage by the flood:-

Sugar	3,080	lbs.
Butter	70	"
Cheese	40	"
Margarine	376	"
Dried Fruit	160	"
Cooking Fats	1,346	"
Flour	840	"
Wheatmeal	350	"
Treacle	10	"
Dripping	22	"
Dried Egg	28	"
	<hr/>	
	6,322	"
	<hr/>	

The following fish and tinned foods were condemned at shops or in transit:-

<u>FISH</u>	Halibut	14	lbs.
	Cod Fillet	42	"
	Crabs	178	"
		<hr/>	
		234	"
		<hr/>	

TINNED FOODS

13	Tins	Plums	24	lbs.
2	"	Cherries	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	"
1	"	Beans	$\frac{1}{2}$	"
3	"	Peas	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	"
5	"	Luncheon		
		Meat	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	"
1	"	Spam	1	"
1	"	Minced Meat	$\frac{3}{4}$	"
3	"	Milk	3	"
2	"	Ox Tongue	14	"
			<hr/>	
			59	"
			<hr/>	

PORT SANITARY

During the year 13 motor vessels entered the port for cargo, the total Nett Registered being 1890. The ports or places with which Wells has had trade were:-

Leith and Inverness	Barley
Ipswich and Felixstowe	Wheat

All vessels inspected were in a clean and satisfactory condition,

SHELL-FISH

There is no alteration from the conditions mentioned in former reports.

Yours obediently,

F. RODWELL.

Sanitary Inspector.

